(d) As per the highlights of the Mid Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five
Year Plan of the Planning Commission, the reasons for slowdown in industrial
growth are:

- Slackening in aggregate demand coupled with decline in rural demand owing to low agriculture output in 1997-98.
- Slowdown in general investment climate,
- Erosion of competitive advantage of Indian exports due to steep depreciation of South-East Asian currencies.
- Persistence of infrastructure bottlenecks, and
- Increasing competition from imports as a result of the opening of the economy.

(e) The Government has been closely monitoring the performance of industrial production and will take suitable steps at appropriate time.

Demand for concessions for farmers in W.T.O, meeting

1466. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to demand some concessions for farmers in the coming WTO meet in December this year to enable India to compete with the world market;

(b) if so, what are plans in details;

(c) whether it is also a fact that wide-ranging review of the agreement on agriculture in 1947 with WTO was discussed globally by the member countries in the third week of October; and

(d) if so, what was the trend of member countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) The mandated negotiations under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture are being conducted through the Special Sessions of the WTO Committee on Agriculture. The next special session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture is scheduled in February 2001. India proposes to seek enhanced market access opportunities for its farmers by demanding a substantial reduction in the tariffs, elimination of export subsidies and substantial reduction in domestic support by the developed countries while also demanding sufficient flexibility under

Agreement on Agriculture to take care of its food security and livelihood concerns.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Promoting Handicrafts, Artificial Jewellery of Rajasthan

1467. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the India Trade Promotion Organisation to promote handicrafts, artificial jewellery etc. of Rajasthan in the world market during the last three years;

(b) whether there has been any significant increase in exports of these items from Rajasthan as a result of steps taken by India Trade Promotion Organisation; and

(c) if not, what other steps Government propose to take to promote the handicrafts and artificial jewellary of Rajasthan and increase the export of these items from Rajasthan.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHPI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) India Trade Promotion Organization is the nodal agency for promoting Indian products in the world markets by arranging participation of Indian trade & industry in exhibitions/ promotional events held abroad. During the last three years, the companies based in Rajasthan and else where displayed Rajasthan* Handicrafts, artificial jewellery items etc. in the exhibition/events organized by ITPO. The details of exhibitions/fairs held are given in the annexed statement *(See* below)

(b) Reports from the participants indicate that business was generated in these fairs.

(c) The steps taken to promote handicrafts in the whole country including the State of Rajasthan include; sponsoring of sales-cum-study teams aborad; overseas publicity, organisation of buyer-seller's meets; overseas publicity and publication of catalogues, participation in various international fairs and organisation of Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fairs (Autumn and spring) and India Carpet Expo as annual features. ITPO proposes to hold an exclusive India Handicrafts and Gifts Show in Tokyo, Japan in 2001-2002 and plans to take around 5-6 companies from Rajasthan out of a total of 20 companies in the show.